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What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for handling jobs within a computer system, comprising the
- 2 steps of:
- providing a plurality of work items, each work item representing a job to be
- 4 performed, each work item including a category, state, and change history;
 - placing each work item into one of a plurality of queues;

in turn, opening each work item in a queue, and executing one or more tasks on the item; and

after executing the tasks, if the job represented by a work item is complete archiving the work item, and if the job is not yet complete, placing the work item into a queue.

- 1 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of executing a task includes the 2 step of modifying the work item.
- 1 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of executing a task includes the
- 2 step of sending an e-mail to a person.
- 1 4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of executing a task includes the
- 2 step of sending a fax to a person.

- 1 5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of executing a task includes the
- 2 step of moving the work item to a queue different form its present queue.
- 1 6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of executing one or more tasks
- 2 comprises the steps of:

providing a plurality of composite actions, each composite action including a rule and at least one task to be executed as a result of evaluation of the rule;

5 evaluating the rule for a composite action; and

executing the task corresponding to the evaluation of the rule.

- 1 7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the work items each further include an
- 2 identification of a party that created the work item.

- 1 8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the work items each further include a
- 2 description of the job represented by the work item.
 - 9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the work items each further include a due date for the work item.
- 1 10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the work items each further include a
- 2 current location for the work item.

- 1 11. A system for handling jobs within a computer system, comprising:
- 2 a plurality of queues;
- a plurality of work items, each representing a job to be performed, each
- 4 work item having a category, a state, and a history;
- a plurality of composite actions, each defining one or more tasks to be executed with respect to a work item.
 - 12. The system of Claim 11, wherein each composite action includes a rule to
- 2 be evaluated, and at least two sets of tasks to be performed depending on the
- 3 outcome of the evaluation.
- 1 13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the rule evaluates to a value of true or
- 2 false.
- 1 14. The system of Claim 13, further including a set of rules to be evaluated if
- there is no rule to be evaluated.
- 1 15. The system of Claim 11, wherein the work items each further include an
- 2 identification of a party that created the work item.

- 1 16. The system of Claim 11, wherein the work items each further include a
- 2 description of the job represented by the work item.
- 1 17. The system of Claim 11, wherein the work items each further include a due date for the work item.
- 1 18. The system of Claim 11, where in the work items each further include a
- 2 current location for the work item.

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